

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JULY 2020

MINUTE EXTRACT

GSC/14/20-21 Scrutiny Review – Tourism – Business & Non Business

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised that a draft project plan had been circulated to Members and this was to help scope the review. The Director of Growth and Economic Development and the Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager were present to assist in scoping the review.

Members had a wide ranging discussion on potential Scrutiny topics, which included a focus on local and parish issues, contributions to the Council's Growth Plan, tourism, and the post Covid-19 economic response.

The Committee heard that the Coronavirus Pandemic had significantly impacted particular sectors of the economy, such as in tourism and on the High Street, and that both sectors could take a long time to recover.

There was a consensus that the District's tourist attractions had a lot to offer, and that more could be done to promote North East Derbyshire's various events. Members also discussed the possibility of scrutinising One Public Estate (OPE) Projects.

The Committee agreed to feed comments into both the emerging Growth Plan and draft Tourism Plan at the next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee on 7 September 2020. Members also remained open to a further spotlight review on the One Public Estate (OPE) Projects.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

MINUTE EXTRACTS

Scrutiny Review - Tourism Business & Non Business

GSC/23/20-21 Previous Scrutiny Review Action Plan - Tourism

The Director of Growth and Economic Development, and the Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager was present at the meeting to discuss the previous Scrutiny Review Action Plan on Tourism.

The Officers updated the Committee on progress made against the recommendations in the Action Plan. Members also heard about the timescales in regards to the completion of the recommendations, including the appointment of a new tourism officer. The Committee noted that the Tourism Strategy was being submitted to a meeting of Cabinet in November for approval.

Members had a wide ranging discussion on the impacts Covid-19 has had on tourism in the District. The Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager also detailed the support that the Council had offered to local businesses, and the engagement with local business that had emerged, in part to the Pandemic.

RESOLVED – That the Action Plan on Tourism be signed off as complete.

GSC/24/20-21 Tourism Strategy

The Committee received a presentation from the Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager that provided an update on the emerging Tourism Strategy.

Members heard that the Council launched a Tourism Business Engagement Project during the lockdown period, and that it was split into two phases. The first was engaging with business that had been impacted the most as a result of the Pandemic, and who were reopening after the lockdown in July. It was stated that the response rate had been high, and that business had appreciated the engagement and support.

The Committee noted that phase 2 would involve engaging with local business with follow up phone calls, and inviting them to workshops so that they could enhance their social media presence. It was stated that the Council had engaged with an external partner to carry out those calls, and get in touch with businesses who did not respond in phase 1.

The Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager informed Members that the feedback from the Tourism Business Engagement Project would then be used to further shape the Tourism Plan, so that businesses were confident the Plan could assist them. Members heard that KPI's included in the Tourism Strategy could be used to measure the effectiveness of the Tourism function at NEDDC. The Committee discussed a number of KPI's which could be used to determine the success of the Council's Tourism Plan, including overnight visits, events and attractions.

Members also discussed advertisement, and the potential difficulty in attracting visitors to the area whilst caution remains over the Pandemic. The Committee had a wide ranging discussion on the budget available, and the support the Council was able to offer businesses facing uncertainty. The Officers informed Members that the Plan would work with businesses on a sectorial basis, rather than where they were located geographically in the District.

There was a consensus that North East Derbyshire should be considered an attraction in its own right, but faced challenges in regards to creating a uniqueness for the District. Members enquired about the partnership work with other local authorities such as Bolsover District Council and Chesterfield Borough Council.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

GSC/25/20-21 **Approval of Project Plan**

The Committee considered the Draft Project Plan.

Members agreed that they would like to speak to tourism officers from Derbyshire County Council who specialised in the countryside trails, as well as local businesses in the tourism sector.

The Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager informed the Committee that the Growth Strategy and the Tourism Strategy was being submitted to a meeting of Cabinet in November. If approved, they would then be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Draft Project Plan be approved.

GSC/26/20-21 **Approval of Timetable**

The Committee considered the Draft Timetable.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager requested that Members submit via email any draft questions for the proposed interviews.

RESOLVED – That the Draft Timetable be approved

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2020

MINUTE EXTRACT

**GSC/36/
20-21** **Scrutiny Review**

- (a) The Committee welcomed Andy Heath, Bolsover Countryside Partnership Manager to the meeting.

Members heard that the officer had worked on a variety of projects involving sustainable tourism in the Bolsover area, with a view to support and enhance the environment, residents' health and wellbeing, the local economy, carbon reduction and sustainable travel.

Members were informed about a number of projects that the officer was co-ordinating including the 'visit, sleep, cycle, repeat' initiative. Members noted that considerable amounts of funding had been secured to invest in the initiative area which included parts of North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Mansfield, Worksop and South Yorkshire.

The Bolsover Countryside Partnership Manager discussed a number of attractions in North East Derbyshire such as the Five Pits Trail, the Pleasley Pit Trail and the Cuckoo Way. Members noted that connectivity was vital for a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy.

The Committee discussed potential connectivity sites in North East Derbyshire, and that there was a growing market in that area of sustainable tourism, demonstrated with the multi-million pound investment in neighbouring local authorities.

Members heard about a number of feasibility studies which were taking place in Bolsover. One of the outcomes was that within a one hour drive, there was nearly four million people who could access Bolsover's attractions. It was stated that similar feasibility studies could be done in North East Derbyshire.

The officer commented that one of the biggest challenges was to establish a clear identity and brand for the visitor economy in the area. Consultants in Bolsover had identified that the area should be based around what it offered, such as cycling routes and networks, and not geographic location, such as it being located near the Peak District. The Committee heard that going forward, it would be useful for all neighbouring authorities to work together and collectivise the Pits Trails.

The Bolsover Countryside Partnership Manager commented that the

District lacked infrastructure around cycle routes, such as cafes and shops, and that infrastructure was vital if the 'visit, sleep, cycle, repeat' initiative was to be a success.

The Committee had a wide ranging discussion on tourism and the potential for North East Derbyshire to develop a successful visitor economy. Members enquired about the plans for HS2 and the implications on the District's attractions.

Members heard that Cabinet was due to consider a potential partnership with the Countryside Partnership in the near future.

Members thanked the officer for attending the meeting.

The officer then left the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

(b) Calagran Four Paws/Shady Hall Farm

These interviews did not take place because the business owners were unable to attend due to circumstances.

(c) Discussion on Next Steps and any Further Interviews

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager informed Members that the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, and the Director of Growth and Economic Development, were due to attend the next meeting to discuss the Council's Growth and Tourism Strategies.

Members discussed the District's attractions and the potential for further investment and infrastructure. The Committee requested a written answer from a member of the Economic Development Team outlining what the Council was doing to support the areas businesses during the Pandemic.